

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 22, 2022

The Honorable Martin Oberman
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E St., S.W.
Washington, DC 20423

Dear Chairman Oberman,

We have significant concerns with delays in rail shipments affecting agriculture goods from getting to market and threatening the supply of feed to livestock producers. We appreciate the Surface Transportation Board's recent announcement to hold public hearings on the matter and urge swift action to remedy the situation and ensure our nation's supply chain remains reliable for Iowa farmers and businesses.

We have heard reports that rail movement has dramatically backed up over the recent months, causing serious concerns about the ability to move grain and essential agricultural producers to end users. One farmer-owned cooperative in Iowa is experiencing turnaround times more than double their typical average, adding weeks to their timelines and greatly diminishing the amount of bushels they can move. Even more dire, these delays are affecting shipments of feed to dairy farmers across the country, stretching supply and increasing uncertainty for farmers.

The longer these issues persist, the greater the effect it will have on the entire agriculture supply chain. Producers in Iowa are already concerned about grain bin space for this year's harvest as delays continue to add up and they are unable to move last year's crop. Additionally, many other agriculture businesses rely on dependable rail service, such as Iowa biofuel and soybean crush plants, to get their product to market and continued delays create substantial uncertainty.

While the global pandemic has put unprecedented strain on our nation's supply chain, these are not new concerns. In fact, the United States Department of Agriculture has stated they have consistently heard of similar issues of poor rail service over the past few years.

We urge you to take swift action following the hearings later this month to improve the reliability of our nation's rail system and ensure Iowa farmers and businesses have a reliable means of transporting goods. We appreciate your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Cindy Axne
Member of Congress



Randy Feenstra
Member of Congress